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ABSTRACT

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has provided democratization assistance in Macedonia since 1993 in the areas of civic education, election monitoring, voter education, political party building, and parliamentary development. Since 1999, NDI has conducted a program designed to increase the capacity of members of parliament (MPs) to play a substantive role in legislative development. In late 1999, at the request of group leaders and MPs, NDI expanded the scope of its work to include constituent liaison assistance, a parliamentary internship program, and consultations on the implications of transitioning from a part-time to a full-time parliament. The NDI's long-term goal in Macedonia is for the parliament to build and maintain ties with the electorate, to draft and analyze legislation, and to construct legislative oversight. To this end, NDI has set forth six objectives for Macedonia: (1) a professional nonpartisan staff is created or is in process of creation; (2) parliamentary commissions conduct public hearings to incorporate citizen input into legislation and strengthen legislative deliberation and oversight; (3) members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology; (4) an expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions; (5) members of parliament and non-governmental organizations strengthen their interaction on legislation; and (6) members of parliament employ constituent relations techniques that contribute to parliamentary accountability and citizen representation. Work in 2001 was hampered by a conflict between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian insurgents. Yet, the following was accomplished: (1) additional MPs held office hours; (2) some progress was made with the parliamentary information technology component and through the parliamentary internship program; (3) Macedonia prepared for parliamentary elections in early 2002; and (4) focus groups were conducted, election-related activities were prepared, and the parliamentary development program was continued. (BT)

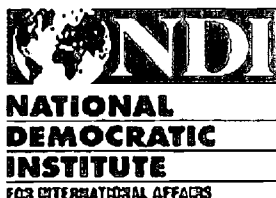
**Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Political and Civic Participation.
Quarterly Reports, 2001.**

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Quarterly Report
FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:
POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00
January 1 to March 31, 2001

I. SUMMARY

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has provided democratization assistance in Macedonia since 1993 in the areas of civic education, election monitoring, voter education, political party building and parliamentary development. Since 1999, NDI has conducted a program designed to increase the capacity of members of parliament (MPs) to play a substantive role in legislative development. In late 1999, at the request of parliamentary group leaders and MPs, the Institute expanded the scope of its work to include constituent liaison assistance, a parliamentary internship program and consultations on the implications of transitioning from a part-time to a full-time parliament. The Institute's long-term goal in Macedonia is for the parliament to build and maintain ties with the electorate, to draft and analyze legislation, and to conduct legislative oversight. This goal falls under USAID's strategic objective 2.1.2 (strengthened parliamentary structures and operations and enhanced communications between citizens and legislators). To this end, NDI has set forth the following objectives in Macedonia:

- A professional nonpartisan staff is created or is in the process of creation;
- Parliamentary commissions conduct public hearings to incorporate citizen input into legislation and strengthen legislative deliberation and oversight;
- Members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology;
- An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions;
- Members of parliament and non-governmental organizations strengthen their interaction on legislation; and
- Members of parliament employ constituent relations techniques that contribute to parliamentary accountability and citizen representation.

This quarter was marred by violent clashes between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian insurgents in the northern part of the country. The insurgents claim to be fighting on

behalf of the ethnic Albanian population in Macedonia, who feel they are treated as second-class citizens. Despite these occurrences, NDI was able to carry out scheduled program events. Much of the first half of the quarter was spent laying the groundwork for activities held in March, such as the political party assessment and consultations with MPs on legislative ethics. The parliamentary interns were introduced to techniques in public speaking and debate, and the constituent relations program began its third session with a new group of MPs. This quarter saw important results: additional MPs held office hours, all parliamentary groups installed computers in their coordinators' offices, and Deputy Danevski agreed that the working group on the law of the status of MPs should hold a public hearing on the bill – the first time in 10 years that any parliamentarian has shown willingness to make a piece of legislation available for public comment.

NDI is hopeful that the current conflict will not disrupt future activities. Rather, the Institute hopes this opportunity will allow advancement of its parliamentary work, as attention is focused on strengthening Macedonia's political institutions and making them more responsive to people's needs.

II. BACKGROUND

After a four-year boycott by the opposition, the 1998 parliamentary elections returned all major political parties to the parliament. NDI recognized an opportunity to support the parliament, and to assist it in developing as a representative political body. The most recent events in the country (detailed below) demonstrate that the biggest challenge to democracy in Macedonia is found within the country's borders. The parliament has constantly been referred to as one of the only institutions equipped to handle the political demands during the crisis. NDI's parliamentary program is designed to increase the institution's ability to act as a representative body of all its citizens.

Macedonia's northern region, which shares its borders with Kosovo, has been the scene of violent clashes between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian extremists of the National Liberation Army (NLA). Fighting began when Albanian insurgents attacked police in the border village of Tanusevci on February 18, triggering a conflict that spread west into the surrounding mountain villages near Tetovo, Macedonia's second-largest city.

Macedonian officials have blamed NATO's KFOR peacekeeping forces for failing to control the cross-border movement of weapons and armed men, thus allowing the violence to spread from the Presevo valley in southern Serbia into Macedonia. Despite alleged ties with the Albanian Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB), which is active in southern Serbia, the NLA seems to draw its membership from the ethnic Albanian minorities in Macedonia as well as from veterans of the now-disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

The rebels want to expand and internationalize their conflict in hopes of mobilizing Western sympathy and support in order to improve political and economic rights for ethnic Albanians in the face of systematic discrimination by majority Slavs; ethnic Albanians constitute roughly 30 percent of Macedonia's population. However, the international community has responded with much criticism toward the violence and destabilization spurred by the rebels. Ethnic Albanian

parties in Macedonia have denounced the violence, fearing that it is counterproductive to their efforts of instituting constitutional change through democratic means.

On March 23, under the support of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and KFOR, the Macedonian government began measured military responses designed to drive out the Albanian rebels. Hundreds of infantry troops backed by tanks and helicopter gun ships were deployed into the hills above Tetovo, forcing the rebels to retreat further into the mountains. The government has sought to keep its ethnic Albanian coalition partner, the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), within the government while the operation is completed; the government then hopes to start broad talks on constitutional and political issues. The leader of the DPA, Arben Xhaferi, and other ethnic Albanian activists have made clear that swift and visible movement of a variety of issues is necessary to ensure their continued cooperation.

Ethnic Albanians want a revision of the constitution in order to remove what they see as exclusionary references to the country as a state of Macedonians or Slavs, the majority ethnic group; a commitment to official bilingualism; greater employment of ethnic Albanians in state organizations, including security agencies; and the decentralization of power. The Macedonian government counters that the ethnic Albanian minority has full political rights and that its political parties are members of a coalition government.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Resident Representative Placement

Allan Green, a former professional staff member with the Connecticut General Assembly, joined NDI's staff in March for six weeks as a temporary resident representative for the Parliamentary Development Program. Green will work on nonpartisan professional staff development as part of the Assembly's transition to a full-time institution, as well as on the program's information technology and ethics components.

Political Party Assessment Mission

NDI's Director for Political Party Programs, Ivan Doherty, Program Officer Aimee Breslow, external consultant Stefan Krause and NDI/Macedonia Resident Representative Victoria Ayer conducted a political party assessment in Macedonia from March 12 to 16, 2001. The objectives of the mission were to assess the feasibility of instituting a political party development program that addresses NDI's and USAID's identified needs in Macedonia and to recommend a concrete course of action for its development and implementation.

Prior to the political party assessment team's arrival, each NDI/Macedonia staff member tracked the developments of a particular political party, developed ties with party members, and gathered basic information about the parties using a political party assessment questionnaire. This data was combined to provide the assessment team with an overall view of the situation, as well as specifics about each political party. With this information, NDI staff also determined the most appropriate persons for the assessment team to meet.

NDI/Washington also met at length with representatives of the USAID/Washington assessment mission, which completed a comprehensive review of democracy programs in Macedonia in Autumn 2000. The USAID assessment mission's recommendations placed a strong emphasis on the need to reform political parties: USAID concluded that political parties in Macedonia have an unequal share of power, and that checks and balances did not exist to curb the parties' influence. USAID advised NDI to concentrate on finding "disaffected" party members, meaning people who were frustrated by the current state of affairs and interested in change. The USAID mission believed that a substantial number of disaffected party members existed in mid-level political positions in both federal and municipal strata of government, and that a program could be developed to reform parties with this group in mind.

Meetings were scheduled with the Democratic Alternative (DA), the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Liberal Party (LP), the Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP), the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – True Macedonian Reformist Option (VMRO-VMRO). Since the assessment mission took place as the latest crisis in Macedonia was unfolding, the mission was not able to meet with all of the scheduled participants. Regrettably, all meetings with representatives of the DPA were cancelled, as was the only meeting scheduled with DA. Meetings were held both at the national and municipal levels, and took place in Skopje, Tetovo, Strumica and Veles. In addition to speaking with party officials, MPs, and representatives of political youth and women's unions, NDI's Skopje office organized a roundtable with representatives of Macedonian NGOs to solicit the civil sector's perspective of political parties and how they operate.

NDI/Macedonia and the mission team observed that, although political parties are brimming with structure, rules, and regulations, very few of these procedures are followed. Although all parties claim to have a well-defined place along the political spectrum and to subscribe to a particular ideology, the NDI mission found that power and patronage played a far greater role than ideology, and that parties revolve around the personalities of their leaders. A small cadre at the top of each party decides who will serve in certain positions within the party or the government, determines policy, and develops party platforms. The assessment revealed that political parties are highly centralized, information is rarely communicated downwards, not even to party members, and that true competition for voters does not exist. Most citizens view political parties as organizations aimed at obtaining or maintaining power so that the party leaders and their faithful can reap both political and economic rewards. Consequently, public esteem for political parties is very low.

Specifically, the assessment mission observed the following points:

- Although disaffected people do exist in both mid-level and high-level positions in the parties, those openly critical of the system have already been so marginalized that they no longer are able to be agents for change.

- Those party members expressing openness to change are not concentrated in any specific strata, such as youth or women; rather they are dispersed. This has potential implications for future programming.
- No one with whom the team met was able to differentiate between problems facing the parties and problems facing the country.
- Parties and individuals have skewed views of what a party's function should be; i.e., that it serves as an employment agency.
- There seems to be no one at any level open enough to take on the work of changing by-laws or the decision-making process.
- Women and youth organizations/unions are clones of the central party, and have only a token presence in the leadership, with no real authority.

The assessment clarified NDI's understanding that internal political party reform is greatly needed in order for the parties to be considered democratic. It was recognized that the challenge, which had already been recognized and accommodated into programmatic plans, is actually more severe than originally thought. Therefore, although NDI's rationale for political party work remains the same, the challenge is so great that the Institute is reexamining its proposed activities. Under present consideration are programs aimed at emerging leaders, targeted municipalities, and party leadership. NDI will keep USAID updated on the specifics of these programs as the activities take on a more concrete form.

Parliamentary Development Program

Ethics Consultations

In the last quarter of 2000, a bill on the status of MPs was submitted to President Trajkovski for his signature. The bill covers the various rights and responsibilities that MPs would claim both during their employment and in retirement. Noting the bill's provision of a virtual job for life in an economy with 40 percent official unemployment, President Trajkovski refused to sign the law in January 2001. Instead, the bill was sent back to the parliament for review. The Assembly has six months from the date of the bill's rejection to vote again. Should the bill then pass the Assembly by a simple majority, the president must sign it.

In rejecting the legislation, President Trajkovski criticized the inclusion of many perks without any accompanying duties. Neither the Assembly nor individual MPs had even attempted to build public support for the legislation – Deputy Danevski, the bill's sponsor, did not even speak during the televised parliamentary session when the bill was under consideration.

NDI consulted with each parliamentary group coordinator to gauge his or her interest in ethics consultations. The parliamentary groups indicated varying levels of interest in trying to change the draft. Many were also interested in finding ways to build public support for the legislation. NDI took advantage of this opportunity by bringing Eithne Fitzgerald, former Minister and drafter of the Irish Parliament's ethics legislation, to Macedonia from March 17 to March 23, in order to consult with each of the parliamentary group coordinators on the law on the status of MPs.

During the meetings, Fitzgerald consistently emphasized that all countries have experienced problems where some MPs fail to live up to the high standards expected from those who hold public office. To minimize this problem and to ensure that the actions of a few do not damage public trust in parliament as a whole, Fitzgerald said, it is important that broad ethical codes are backed up by clear rules, and that those rules be enforced.

The establishment of public trust in parliament and its deputies relies on several key elements:

- Commitment to public service
- A code of practice adhered to by its members
- Transparency in the operation of parliament
- Public disclosure of deputies' private interests
- Mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest
- Procedures for investigating alleged breaches of the law, the code of conduct, or the rules on conflicts of interest
- Appropriate sanctions for breaches of the rules
- Legislators uphold the laws they make
- Freedom from bribery and corruption
- No immunity from investigating alleged bribery and corruption
- Pay and expenses to be seen as fair, reasonable and not excessive; deputies' incomes should be set at a level that allows MPs to be full-time and free from financial pressures, which might tempt them to seek illegal payments or preferential treatment in public contracts.

Although a great deal of inner turmoil was occurring in the country, the window of opportunity for these discussions was critical: the six-month deadline to pass the bill; the MPs' desire to receive the benefits in the bill; the MPs' desire to become "professional" before the 2002 parliamentary elections; and the MPs' realization that this bill should be deliberated all served to create an atmosphere of willingness to consider outside suggestions about ethics provisions. The effectiveness of the consultations hinged on Fitzgerald's expertise. Having recently been through this experience in the Irish parliament, Fitzgerald provided a welcome and informed perspective.

Follow-Up to Ethics Consultations

NDI held a number of meetings with parliamentary group coordinators to revisit ethics issues. The most fruitful of these was with Deputy Kraljevski, coordinator for VMRO-DPMNE, who was interested in having NDI provide technical assistance to the parliamentary ethics working group. Deputy Kraljevski pledged to ask the Assembly's president to activate the working group on the law on the status of MPs.

Deputy Kraljevski also brought in the Parliament's secretary general-designate, Jovan Josifovski, and indicated a clear desire to work closely with NDI on its parliamentary development program.

Information Technology Assistance

During this quarter, NDI has been working to implement recommendations made in its assessment report entitled "*Macedonia Parliament: IT Program Report and Recommendations Assessment Report on Work To-Date and Proposal for Future Activity*," which was submitted to USAID on February 8, 2001.

This quarter, NDI made progress on the following tasks:

- NDI arranged for two parliamentary IT staff members to visit the Parliament of Estonia, but the political changes within Macedonia caused the visit to be delayed. NDI will re-schedule the visit once the position of head of the information technology sector is filled, or sooner if circumstances permit.
- Marina Ivanovska, chief of the Computer Center, and Mane Necev, Systems Engineer, attended the first of several networking classes in March to help them learn how to manage the network software purchased by the parliament.
- NDI evaluated responses to its request for quotations (RFQ) for networking services, and selected NEOCOM to provide network installation and consultation. NEOCOM was selected based on its corporate capabilities, ability to perform the work, cost, and non-partisan reputation. The parliament has been asked to approve NEOCOM as a computer-services provider. NEOCOM will report directly to NDI and will be paid through NDI, not through the parliament.

Constituent Relations

Third Group of Members of Parliament

This quarter, NDI began its third round of constituent relations consultations with a new group of MPs. To ensure diversity, participants were selected from each parliamentary caucus, different geographic locations, and diverse ethnic groups. As with the previous two groups, NDI will have one-on-one sessions to discuss such topics as casework, office hours, newsletters, working with the media, and strategic planning.

Workshop in Republika Srpska

On February 22, NDI/Macedonia Resident Representative Victoria Ayer presented information about constituent relations at the NDI/Republika Srpska (RS) orientation for new members of the RS Assembly. The orientation was an excellent opportunity to create a working framework for constituent relations for newly elected members. Members were presented a full

range of ideas on the importance of constituent relations work and also participated in a practical exercise to encourage them to think creatively about conducting casework.

Public Advocacy vis-à-vis Parliament

For MPs to work well with their constituencies, there must be commensurate interest and effort by their constituents. To ensure that MPs and the public can have a constructive dialogue, NDI will bring together a select group of NGOs and MPs to discuss the mutual benefits of working together and ways to strengthen their relationships. NDI's past interaction with NGOs has shown that certain NGOs are primed and ready to lobby the parliament but do not have the skills to do so effectively. This program will teach a select group of NGOs these skills.

During the past three months, NDI assessed the ability of NGO's to participate in the program based on whether they have moved beyond the need for training in basic capacity-building, identified specific public policy or legislative goals, and attempted to engage in an advocacy-promotion activity.

NDI selected a mix of NGOs for participation based on geography and diversity of sectors represented, as well as on a desire for a mix of membership and expertise-based NGOs. Consultations with each NGO will occur in order to tailor the trainings to the needs of the selected NGOs. Training is set to begin in early May.

The following NGOs have been selected to participate:

1. Polio Plus (disability rights)
2. Organization of Macedonian Women
3. Friends of the Forest
4. Civil Society Resource Center
5. Cerna (animal rights)

Parliamentary Internship Program

In January, NDI met with the interns individually and in groups to discuss their work, problems and areas of improvement. Although interns' tasks vary, most have taken on progressively more responsibility during their internships. While interns still perform some clerical assistance, their primary tasks are researching laws and bills, comparative legislative research, reviewing the parliamentary transcripts, media monitoring, speechwriting, corresponding with public officials and institutions, and meeting with foreign delegations. The interns also have a greater presence in the parliamentary commissions' sessions, as well as the before and after activities, such as gathering relevant materials for the MPs and writing reports from the meetings. They are also actively assisting the secretaries and presidents (chairs) of the commissions.

Although public speaking plays an important role in the articulation of public policy, these skills are not taught either at the high school or university levels in Macedonia. A casual

observer of any parliamentary session would see that public speaking skills are also needed by the MPs. In an effort to improve the public speaking skills of the interns – and, by extension, their supervisors – the interns need practice. In January, NDI provided training on the basics of debate, public speaking, and presentation skills. A small number of interns who are experienced public speakers took an active role in the training process. As a practical exercise, the interns applied these new skills in a debate tournament in February, selecting from the following debate topics:

- Euthanasia should be legal.
- Globalization is essential to economic progress.
- To save the environment, we should all become vegetarians

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: Members of parliament employ constituent relations techniques that contribute to parliamentary accountability and citizen representation.

Result: Through consultations with the Constituent Relations program, Zamir Dika, Parliamentary Group Coordinator for DPA, has begun to hold office hours in his constituency. Deputy Dika has also begun scheduling his time and is working on a strategic plan.

Objective: Members of parliament and non-governmental organizations strengthen their interaction on legislation.

Result: After a seminar on NGO advocacy with NDI, Polio Plus, a disability rights NGO, began a public relations campaign to raise awareness regarding accessibility issues. Polio Plus' access campaign placed wheelchairs and flyers in front of inaccessible public buildings, such as the base of the steps to the law school, in conjunction with National Disability Day.

Objective: Members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology.

Result: All parliamentary groups now have computers in their coordinators' offices.

Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.

Result: After training with NDI, the parliamentary interns successfully completed three rounds of Lincoln-Douglas-style debate, gaining valuable public policy and public speaking skills in the process.

Objective: A professional nonpartisan staff is created or is in the process of creation.

Result: As a result of consultations with NDI's expert, the drafter and opponents to the Law on the Status of MPs, were afforded the opportunity to discuss possible changes to bring the legislation in line with international best practices.

Objective: Parliamentary commissions conduct public hearings to incorporate citizen input into legislation and strengthen legislative deliberation and oversight.

Result: Deputy Danevski, the architect of the Status of MPs bill, has agreed that the working group should hold a public hearing on the bill. This is the first time in 10 years that any parliamentarian has shown willingness to make a piece of legislation available for public comment.

IV. EVALUATION

Political Party Assessment Mission

The political party assessment mission was an extremely valuable activity for the Institute. Prior to the trip, certain assumptions had already been made about the direction of political party programming. The NDI teams in Skopje and Washington had already begun to create activities and target possible groups and participants for the program. The assessment was originally seen as a vehicle to confirm basic assumptions and update current knowledge, and to fine-tune a program already in creation.

However, the assessment team found that the lack of internal democracy and the high degree of centralization in political parties was far more severe than first realized. By the end of the week in Macedonia, the team unanimously agreed that the original program proposed would not be sufficient to bring about change, and that an entirely different approach would be necessary. The knowledge gained by the team will allow NDI to launch a far more effective program.

Information Technology

Due both to recent political problems within Macedonia and to various maneuverings within the parliament's administrative staff, little work has been completed for Phase One of the IT program. While the parliament's staff has now been trained in basic keyboarding techniques and commonly used computer programs, the MPs have yet to receive any training. The single biggest problem has been that Goran Stanoevski, the current head of the Information Technology Sector, stands to lose his position with the appointment of a new secretary general of the parliament. As a result, Stanoevski has consistently failed to show up for work in the parliament. Although Stanoevski is still technically working, his inability to get anything done has brought the computer networking to a standstill. One advantage to this development, though, is that NDI has been able to reiterate the need for parliament to hire professional, nonpartisan staff.

Parliamentary Internship Program

The Institute has initiated a discussion both internally and with USAID about designing a sustainability plan for the parliamentary internship program. NDI will consult with its resident representative in Slovakia, who has just completed a transition plan for the Slovak internship program, and with Macedonian members of parliament, NGOs and faculty advisors at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Political Party Assessment

The political party assessment mission report will be submitted next quarter along with recommendations on how to proceed with a future political party program.

Constituent Relations

Consultations will continue with the third group of MPs. The constituent relations handbook will be presented at a seminar for all current and previous participants in the program. This seminar will also focus on the importance of door-to-door canvassing in constituent work and will include practical tips and training.

Parliamentary Institution-Building

Consultations will continue with members of parliament to focus on the Law on the Status of MPs. NDI will follow up on last year's proposal that the parliament develop an oversight committee. Once the new secretary general has been selected, a study mission to a European Parliament is also anticipated in order to provide training. Finally, once Stanoevski's status in the parliament solidifies, select IT staff will travel to the Estonian Parliament for a study mission.

Parliamentary Internship

The interns will learn several more components of being a legislator: drafting legislation and supporting memoranda, holding public hearings, and working in committees. This will culminate in a two-day mock parliament session.

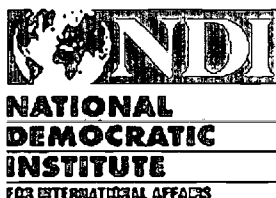
NDI will take a select group of parliamentary interns on a study mission to Slovakia. This visit will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences between the interns working in the Slovakian and Macedonian programs and increase each group's specific knowledge regarding the other's parliamentary internship program.

Once in Bratislava, the Macedonian interns will meet with their Slovakian counterparts and shadow them for a day as they go about their committee work. The mission will also include official visits to the Parliament of Slovakia, meetings with parliamentary officials, and visits to institutions and NGOs. Another component of the mission will be to examine the strategies that

NDI/Slovakia used to begin the transition of the internship program to the parliament. Since NDI/Macedonia's mandate is to develop a similar exit strategy, such an exchange of knowledge will be invaluable.

NGO Training

Training sessions in May will focus on the following topics: internal and external communication, event and message development, advocacy, coalition building, strategic planning, and evaluation.



Quarterly Report
FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:
POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00
April 1 to June 30, 2001

I. SUMMARY

The ongoing conflict between Macedonian forces and ethnic Albanian insurgents in the northern part of the country hampered implementation of all elements of programmatic activity. Despite these obstacles, some progress was made with the parliamentary information technology component and through the parliamentary internship program. However, in June, USAID requested the removal of short-term staff and the temporary relocation of NDI's full-time resident representative.

The Institute's long-term goal in Macedonia is for the parliament to build and maintain ties with the electorate, to draft and analyze legislation, and to conduct legislative oversight. This goal falls under USAID's strategic objective 2.1.2 (strengthened parliamentary structures and operations and enhanced communications between citizens and legislators).

To this end, NDI has set forth objectives in Macedonia that include the creation of a professional nonpartisan staff, skills transfer to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff enabling them to conduct legislative affairs using information technology, and strengthened interaction between nongovernmental organizations and parliament on legislative and policy concerns. Additionally, NDI continues to actively develop constituent relations techniques contributing to parliamentary accountability and citizen involvement in government.

II. BACKGROUND

NDI has provided democratization assistance in Macedonia since 1993 in the areas of civic education, election monitoring, voter education, political party building and parliamentary development. Since 1999, NDI has worked to increase the capacity of members of parliament (MPs) in their roles as legislators and elected political representatives. Such capacity building is achieved through training MPs and their staff on caucus operations, commission functions, and constituent relations. Considerable progress has been achieved in the transfer of political and legislative skills to individual members of parliament, and promising institutional developments have occurred through NDI's program. Still, inter-ethnic political conflict bordering on open

and prolonged warfare has impeded NDI's program implementation and has revealed important, persistent challenges to the country's democratization process.

Until recently, Macedonia alone had avoided the inter-ethnic violence that characterized conflicts elsewhere following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. This distinction ended in February, when violent clashes erupted between Macedonian forces and armed ethnic Albanian insurgents of the National Liberation Army (NLA). A series of scattered and intense conflicts followed predominantly throughout northwestern Macedonia, where the majority of Macedonia's ethnic Albanian population resides.

The stated goal of the NLA is to strengthen political and economic rights for ethnic Albanians, who comprise an estimated 25 to 30 percent of the country's two million inhabitants. The insurgent's demands include: amendments to the constitution that would guarantee equal standing for ethnic Macedonians and Albanians; a commitment to official bilingualism; increased presence of ethnic Albanians in state organizations, including security agencies; and the decentralization of power. For its part, the Macedonian government has countered that the ethnic Albanian minority already possesses sufficient political rights, as evidenced by the multi-ethnic composition of the coalition government and the upcoming opening of a private, Albanian-language university in the country's second largest city, Tetovo. In addition, the government has accused the insurgents of wanting to split the country apart along ethnic lines.

The crisis in Macedonia reached a critical level over the weekend of June 22 to 24, when the Macedonian army launched an attack on Aracinovo, a village roughly 10km outside of Skopje that had been under NLA control since June 9. On June 25, NATO and EU representatives brokered a deal between the NLA and the Macedonian government that allowed the NLA to leave Aracinovo and return to its home territory without having to relinquish its weapons. This move, viewed by ethnic Macedonians as giving in to pro-Albanian, Western pressure, sparked a demonstration in Skopje that resulted in the storming of the parliament by ethnic Macedonians.

On June 12, the increased level of violence and anti-Western sentiment prompted USAID to remove NDI's short-term staff from the region. After the storming of the parliament on June 25, USAID ordered the relocation of NDI's full-time resident representative, Victoria Ayer, as well as the closing of the field office until further notice. Although the NDI office is closed, local staff continue to work on program activities in whatever capacity they can.

Macedonia's ability to find a political solution to the conflict depends greatly on the parliament's ability to acquit itself of its political role. With a unity government in place, it is hoped the parliament will become the center of much-needed political dialogue and will be tested in its ability to operate in fulfillment of a key democratic premise: parliament as the principal representative political body of citizens. As the only place where political parties can discuss public policy issues across ethnic lines, the parliament is the only political institution in Macedonia that can serve as a conflict prevention mechanism. Therefore, the legislature should be viewed as a conflict prevention institution. If parliament fails to fulfill its special role, that failure will further contribute to ethnic discord.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Parliamentary Development Program

Parliament's inability to convene has postponed confirmation of a new secretary general. This has hampered NDI's ability to implement large sections of its parliamentary development program. Secretary General-designate Jovan Josifovski continues to enjoy wide support amongst parliamentarians, despite his inability to take office. Josifovski has articulated his wholehearted support for NDI and wishes to work closely with the organization as soon as is possible.

Nonpartisan Staff Development

In this quarter, NDI consulted with the secretary general-designate to gauge his interest in various elements of nonpartisan staff development. The secretary identified staff reorganization and reclassification as his most important and immediate task. The secretary strongly acknowledged the need for reform of the parliamentary staff structure and was open to NDI's help and suggestions.

Following consultations with coordinators and the secretary general-designate, NDI prepared a draft manual on recruitment and selection procedures for the creation of a nonpartisan, effective and merit-based civil service. Reclassification and reorganization of the staff structure will center on the following areas:

- Technical services for members
- Plenary services
- Commission services
- Special research services
- International relations

The reclassification and reorganization of staff cannot begin, however, until the cessation of hostilities and the confirmation of the Secretary General-designate.

Commission Staff Training

A draft of the training program for commission staff has been produced. Implementation of this program is on hold until the appointment of the secretary general-designate. Future activities of the training program have been discussed with the secretary general-designate, and he is supportive of the program and considers it one of his top three priorities.

Member Code of Conduct

During this quarter, NDI met with various deputies to establish a working group on ethics that would consider the Status of MPs Bill, which addresses MPs privileges and responsibilities. At the time of the relocation of the Skopje office, June 28, the deputies remained broadly supportive of NDI's involvement in this area, keen to receive the organization's stamp of

approval. The president of the parliament activated the working group, which included all the parliamentary group coordinators, as well as deputies Kraljevski and Andonovski of Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE). The bill, sponsored by Deputy Slobodan Danevski of the Liberal Democratic party, has not yet come up for a vote because of the suspension of parliamentary sessions and will now be heard during the same session as the election of a new secretary general. The bill includes the following characteristics:

- Requires deputies to report annually on their assets (according to Irish model)
- Establishes a commission to receive financial returns
- Strengthens the restrictions on absences from parliament

Information Technology

During this quarter, NDI continued progress on the implementation of a working network for the parliament, while simultaneously providing technical training for the commission staff. By the end of the quarter, NDI had conducted training with all commission staff, with the exception of the secretary and the deputy secretary. However, NDI faced continued obstacles to a full network access due to the continued procrastination of the director of parliamentary information technology.

Information Technology (IT) Director Stephen Jarrett based in Washington D.C., and Allan Green, temporary resident representative in Skopje, were unable to impel the director of parliamentary IT into action. To address this problem, Jarrett traveled to Skopje on June 1 to resolve this impasse. During the trip, he consulted with USAID and senior staff from NEOCOM, NDI's partner IT contractor, in order to discuss the future and implementation.

Over eight days, Jarrett succeeded in installing a functioning network with shared printers, shared directories, a new web site, a firewall and Internet access. Windows 2000 was installed in 50 workstations. In addition, Jarrett contracted to purchase approximately \$100,000 worth of computer software, hardware and licenses. In collaboration with USAID, it was decided that delivery of this equipment should be deferred until the improvement of the security situation.

In consultation with USAID, Stephen Jarrett proposed that the future funding of Phases II and III (for details of Phases II and III, please see Macedonia Parliament Program: IT Report and Recommendations) be contingent on the following stipulations:

- Parliament develops a professional, dedicated and nonpartisan IT staff;
- Such a staff adheres to a strict, pre-arranged budget; and
- Parliament adopts legislation stipulating procedural standards so that IT equipment may serve as an effective tool of governance.

If the aforementioned conditions were met, IT funding would continue through 2003. If, however, the above conditions were not met, NDI and USAID would discontinue the

parliamentary IT program. In addition, Jarrett recommended that the existing Parliament Intern program be expanded to include two computer interns.

Constituent Relations

Individual Consultations with Members of Parliament

Efforts to conduct the Constituent Relations program were considerably hindered by the on-going conflict throughout this quarter. NDI Resident Representative Victoria Ayer continued her work with the third group of MPs selected to receive training since the inception of the program in 1999. Although initial consultations with the third group did in fact begin in February, further consultations have been postponed as MPs themselves have suspended communication with their own constituents. Attendance at parliament is extremely low and parliamentary sessions are rare. The most recent NDI discussions with MPs have focused exclusively on the conflict and related issues.

Public Advocacy vis-à-vis Parliament

A meaningful constituent relations program involves dialogue between MPs and citizens. In order for MPs to work successfully with their constituencies, there must be commensurate interest and effort on the part of the constituents themselves. To foster constructive dialogue between MPs and the public, NDI plans to bring together a select group of NGOs and MPs to discuss the mutual benefits of working together and ways to strengthen their relationships. Earlier this year, NDI selected a geographically diverse group of NGOs, which had identified specific public policy or legislative goals and made at least some effort to advocate on behalf of those goals.

The following NGOs have been selected to participate:

- Polio Plus (disability rights)
- Organization of Macedonian Women
- Friends of the Forest
- Civil Society Resource Center
- Cerna (animal rights)

In this quarter, NDI held meetings and consultations with each of the five selected partner organizations, but the mood of uncertainty and concern affected their focus as well and limited their ability to perform “regular” work. Advocacy remains impossible in the current climate, as there is no one to whom they might advocate.

Elections

From May 26 to 31, with funding provided by USAID through another cooperative agreement (AEP-A-00-95-00038-00), NDI was a partial sponsor and participant in a conference organized by the Macedonian domestic election monitoring coalition, Citizens for Citizens (C4C). The conference was attended by nearly every domestic monitoring NGO in the region,

many of whom have been NDI partners or received NDI training in the past, such as Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections (GONG), Civic Eye and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID). The gathering provided a forum to discuss lessons learned from their collective experiences. C4C used the conference to develop a strategic plan for possible early elections in January 2002.

Assistance to Political Parties/Partnership with Nansen Dialogue Center

In recent years, electoral competition in Macedonia has become increasingly marred by instances of violence, fraud and intimidation. Even before the recent outbreak of violence, tension among the political parties had been running high. In an attempt to lessen such tensions, NDI and the Nansen Dialogue Center (NDC) agreed to conduct a series of seminars providing practical advice on conducting ethical and professional campaigns. NDC will provide instruction in conflict management techniques and interpersonal/interparty negotiation skills. To this effect, a memorandum of understanding between NDI-Macedonia and NDC has been drafted and is under review. The workshops are tentatively scheduled to begin in September, but will depend on the future political situation.

Parliamentary Internship Program

Legislative Drafting Training

The 30 university students currently serving as parliamentary interns have found their roles and responsibilities consistently expanded over the course of the program, and this quarter saw a continuation of that trend. (Please see Attachment B for a list of interns and their annotated biographies). Recent NDI training focused specifically on the legislative process; interns concentrated on learning how to draft legislation. Such skill-building training was of particular import during the past quarter because the interns had greater than anticipated freedom to develop their personal capacity. The fact that parliament met infrequently due to the political crisis enabled NDI and the interns to focus more intently on legislative drafting procedures than might otherwise have been possible.

The legislative drafting training was followed by several small, NDI-guided sessions, which provided an opportunity for peer review and constructive criticism of their colleagues' drafts. Upon completion of the critique period, the interns were divided into "committees" where their legislation was discussed and debated using the current Macedonian Rules of Procedure for Committees. This activity was in preparation for a mock parliament, initially planned for late July.

Slovakia Study Mission

Accompanied by NDI's Macedonia resident representative and NDI's internship program coordinator, the interns traveled to Bratislava, Slovakia, from April 6 to 13 to meet with their Slovak counterparts. The visit provided an opportunity for the interns to exchange experiences and to expand each groups' specific knowledge with regards to their respective internship program. Both groups of interns attended briefings with parliamentary staff and young MPs,

followed by a day in which the Macedonian interns “shadowed” their Slovak colleagues during committee work. Also included in the mission were visits to various NGOs, which had successfully lobbied for legislative changes.

An additional component of the study mission was an examination of the strategies that NDI-Slovakia used to begin the transition of the management of internship program to the parliament. NDI-Macedonia is in the process of developing a similar transition strategy, and the exchange of knowledge was highly beneficial in the formulation of a similar plan.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The postponement of the secretary general-designate’s appointment and the outbreak of conflict impeded NDI in implementing most aspects of its parliamentary development program. However, progress on program objectives has been made:

Objective: Members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology.

- All parliamentarians and their staffs now have access to networked workstations; all commission staff, with the exception of the secretary and the deputy secretary, have received IT training.

Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.

- After training with NDI, the parliamentary interns successfully completed and defended their own draft pieces of legislation.

One unanticipated result of NDI’s parliamentary internship program has been the selection of one of the interns for a four-month internship with the European Parliament. She will receive not only an internship, but also a law school scholarship (at a law school in Brussels) for that time period as well. This is the first time that a Macedonian citizen has been chosen. The intern’s application focused on her experiences as an intern in the Macedonian parliament and the skills and knowledge she gained there.

V. EVALUATION

As noted above, the level of hostilities and the political environment in Macedonia severely hindered program activities and accomplishments this quarter. The removal of short-term staff, the relocation of NDI’s Resident Representative Victoria Ayer at the request of USAID, and the political environment following the storming of the parliament brought program activity to a standstill.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

NDI will continue to evaluate political circumstances and, in consultation with USAID, will make decisions about future activity in Macedonia as events continue to unfold.

ATTACHMENTS

I. Macedonia Parliamentary Development Program: Assessment and Recommendations by Allen Green

**Macedonia Parliament Development Program:
Assessment and Recommendations
By Allan Green
March to May 2001**

You asked me to meet four objectives in working with the Parliament during my stay in Macedonia. These relate to (1) nonpartisan staff development, (2) staff training, (3) information technology, and (4) member code of conduct.

My report describes progress in each of these areas. I take particular satisfaction in the support for NDI seeing to the installation of a network for the Parliament's computers. That the members addressed their Status of MPs bill and a top leader credited NDI with suggesting changes, is also a matter of some satisfaction.

Most important is the relationship developed with the Secretary General-designate, Jovan Josifovski. In a staff development program, the Secretary General's support can be critical. In this case, NDI has an opportunity to help the Secretary General-designate get started with his most important task, reclassifying the Parliament's employees.

There is a risk of being too closely identified with one leader in a parliamentary program. But in this case, the Secretary General-designate is a long time parliamentary employee, has the support of the opposition and minority parties, and is open to working with NDI. He has readily developed a good relationship with Sashka Cvetkovska, which gives us good access to him. I strongly recommend that NDI take advantage of this opportunity.

Because of the crisis at the end of my stay, I was unable to have a last meeting with the Secretary General-designate. But he called Sashka with his regrets. She, in turn, told him that NDI hopes to have a person in country very soon to work with him.

Nonpartisan Staff Development

My assessment of a year ago called for an oversight committee to make sure the Secretary General conducts himself or herself in a nonpartisan manner, a beefed up and trained research staff, and political staff for the parliamentary groups. Since then, the governing coalition has changed and the Secretary General resigned. A new Secretary General, one of three current Deputy Secretaries General, will be named at a forthcoming session.

In interviews with all of the parliamentary group coordinators, the consensus seems to be that the Deputies are glad that there will be a new Secretary General, particularly because he comes from the existing staff, and they are willing to give him support. None of the parliamentary group coordinators called for any of the recommendations they had sought a year ago. Their lack of interest may be due to the country's political and military crisis and the fact that they are looking to new elections and are not eager to make structural changes at this point.

From my meeting with the Secretary General-designate, it is evident that he is not interested in the research staff. He said that research is a newer staff office and he has not decided where he

will put it in the staff reorganization. He was with the commission (committee) staff for 16 years and is particularly proud of his work with the Legislative and Legal Commission—by far the most active of the commissions.

The Secretary General-designate expressed interest in three areas for NDI assistance: commission staff training, staff reorganization, and the plenary. Commission staff training is addressed in the next section of this report.

The Secretary General-designate views staff reorganization and reclassification as his most important and most immediate task. Parliament has passed a law providing for the reclassification of all public employees and it has been implemented for those working for the Government. The prior Secretary General worked on the regulations to implement this law for the Parliament, but never completed the task. Now, the Secretary General-designate believes the law needs changes for parliamentary staff and wants to propose amendments to the Parliament. But he also wants to start right away on staff reclassifications.

I propose that NDI bring an expert to work with the Secretary General-designate on this task. The Secretary General-designate has expressed his confidence in the expertise of NDI and I believe he would welcome an expert who could help him make revisions in job descriptions and duties and the administrative structure. Such a person would also provide credibility to a new classification scheme—important to the staff's acceptance of a new plan. In my opinion this is a significant opportunity for NDI.

As for the plenary, I think it would be ideal for Don Schneider, Secretary of the Wisconsin State Senate, or Pat Flahaven, his counterpart in Minnesota, to come here in August, when the Parliament is quiet, and spend time with the Secretary General-designate. They could advise him on calendars, recording votes, and the like.

In my meetings with the Secretary General-designate, I told him that I was recommending that NDI provide him with almost immediate assistance in his task of reclassifying employees and that the training program for commission secretaries (below) should be completed by the end of this year. He responded by saying that this is what he likes about NDI: the programs we offer are concrete and timely.

Parliamentary Staff Training

You asked me to develop a plan for parliamentary staff training and, if possible, conduct a first training session. You specified that this program should be based on consultations with the Parliament.

As noted above, the Secretary General-designate identified training of commission secretaries as one of his three priorities for NDI. The Coordinator of the Commission Sector agreed that the secretaries should be trained. The issue is whether the training for commission secretaries should be in their administrative role or in their role as policy researchers. I am recommending a training program (attached) that is a combination of both.

The staff needs assistance in two areas. First, they need training in how to conduct policy research. This training should range from how to take a request to how to write a report. A critical component would be research methods, Internet training, and use of policy options. Second, they need training in proper conduct of legislative staff. We were repeatedly told that the staff are hired because of political or personal contacts and they lack credibility with the Deputies. A training program should emphasize what kinds of activities are improper for legislative staff and how staff can present themselves to the Deputies as neutral experts.

As part of this activity, I believe the commission secretaries should develop a handbook on their duties (from reading the bills to providing expert research on a timely basis) and their conduct (e.g., keeping working hours, helping their colleagues, and avoiding partisan political activity).

Appended to this report is a proposed training program for the commission secretaries. I was not able to begin the training program because the Secretary General was not confirmed by the Parliament by the time I left Macedonia. With only an Acting Secretary General in office and the country in a crisis, it would have been unwise to have started a training program.

Information Technology

You asked me to oversee progress of the information technology component of the NDI program, working closely with Steven Jarrett. Specifically, you asked me to clear up political obstacles to implementation of the computer network and to have NEOCOM provide a status report on installation. Finally, you asked me to oversee training for Deputies.

In meetings with the Parliamentary Group Coordinators, we heard a number of concerns about the status of the computer operations. First, Deputies expressed frustration that their computers were not networked and that they had to put a document on a floppy disk and take it to their secretary in order to print. Second, some Deputies said that they had prepared the list of MPs from their group to be trained and the members were asking for training, yet they had heard nothing. Third, one coordinator explained that he was a commission president as well as coordinator and still he had no computer. He noted that the computers were becoming outdated while they sat in the box.

One of the Parliamentary Group Coordinators suggested that the Parliament should establish an oversight committee on IT. He also advised us that any outside group brought into the Parliament to assist with computer operations would be suspect to the Deputies. The MPs are very concerned about secrecy and security of their information and would need strong assurance that an outside group could be trusted.

Next, we met with the head of the computer operations. It was quickly evident that he no longer had an interest in his job. He said that more than half of the PCs had not been installed, but it would be a problem to put them on desks when the staff might be reclassified. He noted that the Deputies had not been trained, but it was a problem to do so because they have complex schedules and many do not live in Skopje. He said the President had not yet approved the Internet connection, so MPs and staff had deal with a very slow system. As for the party coordinator/commission president, he said that the commissions were not being given computers

yet and that that the Deputy had given his computer to his secretary so he was not entitled to another. Further, there are wiring limitations in the Deputy's office.

I met with the Acting Secretary General and asked her to urge the head of computer operations to begin member training and to install the remaining computers. Further, I wrote to the Parliament's President and all of the parliamentary group coordinators expressing NDI's concern that the computer network was not yet operational and asking their approval for NDI to bring in NEOCOM to make an assessment of what needs to be done.

I sent a copy of the letter to NEOCOM and advised them that they need to carefully prepare a plan to the Parliament, which shows how they can protect the Deputies' secrecy and security from other Deputies, and from an outside group like NEOCOM.

The President approved the NDI request for the assessment of network needs and we told NEOCOM to prepare this assessment as soon as possible. Further, the head of computer operations suddenly took a new interest in his job and set about installing the computers.

Member Code of Conduct

You asked me to follow up on NDI's ethics consultations concerning the Status of MPs bill. In meetings with all the Parliamentary Group Coordinators, I offered NDI's assistance to the working group which was named by the Parliament's President to consider what, if any, changes should be made after the Macedonian President refused to sign the original bill. I also told them that I would contact Eithne Fitzgerald for her comments on changes.

Most of the parliamentary group coordinators indicated that they would defer to Deputy Slobodan Danevski, the sponsor of the original bill. But when we met with Deputy Chedomir Kraljevski, the VMRO-DPMNE parliamentary group head, he pledged to write to the Parliament's President asking that he activate the working group and he called in Deputy Kiril Andonovski, his appointee to the working group. Deputy Andonovski told us that he had asked for the notes prepared by his son from Eithne Fitzgerald's session with the Interns. He said he would present these notes to the working group and ask NDI to review a revised version of the bill.

Subsequently, the President activated the working group on the bill. When we met with Deputy Danevski, the bill's sponsor, he suggested a public hearing on the bill. Our next notice of it, however, was a newspaper article stating that a revised version of the bill had been again placed on the Parliament's agenda, with 48 signatures. In the article, Deputy Kraljevski stating that "We consulted experts from the National Democratic Institute, above all with Allan Green, as well as with a Euro-parliamentarian from Ireland. We did a comparison of our proposed law with regulations in the countries of the European Union. The law will have its original form, but with amendments that have been suggested."

We have not seen a revised version of the bill but have been told that at least two improvements have been made in it. Most important, it follows the Irish example and requires deputies to

report annually on their assets and sets up a commission to receive these filings. Second, it strengthens the language on absences from parliamentary work.

The law apparently does not incorporate suggested language on ethics. But this is a bill on status of MPs, and not on ethics. The government has yet to propose a law on ethics for government employees, but such a law should cover Deputies. This legislation could provide several opportunities for NDI involvement.

From the experience of this bill, several observations come to mind. First, the Deputies were receptive to comments by Eithne Fitzgerald, in part because she comes from a country in the European Union. As they focus on harmonizing their laws with the EU, I believe they will continue to carefully listen to representatives from those countries. Second, the deputies are open to changes but the changes must be within what they find politically acceptable. Thus, while the pension provisions in the bill were more generous than an outside observer would find defensible, the Deputies feel very strongly on this matter and are not open to being swayed. Finally, the Deputies respect NDI and are eager to put the stamp of NDI approval on a product. In this instance, they did not ask for NDI approval, but were quick to point out NDI involvement.

Other Activities

In meetings with the Secretary General-designate and Commission Sector Coordinator, I learned of their strong support for the Intern program. I arranged for Lidija Stojkova to join Sashka and I in a meeting with the Secretary General-designate. At that meeting Lidija explained the program to him and he expressed his interest in integrating the Interns into the permanent staff. He is particularly interested in the Interns working with the commissions. He sees the Interns as future employees of the Parliament.

The Secretary General-designate's support for the Interns is important for two reasons. First, it can lead the way to the Parliament taking over the program at some point in the future. Second, if Interns become an important part of the recruitment base for the Parliament's staff, it could break the tradition of hiring staff for personal or political reasons.

In an unrelated matter, I noticed that an English-language web site carried a banner with the statement that "The Answers by the President of the Macedonian Parliament to Your Questions." By clicking on the banner one was led to about 12 questions submitted by e-mail with remarkably candid responses from the President Androv.

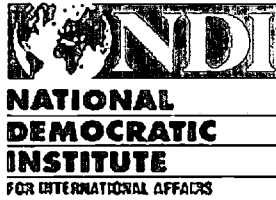
I learned that this format was employed by a respected Macedonian journal and, in effect, reprinted here. It is an excellent example of transparency. After consultations with the Washington staff, I drafted a letter for NDI's President to commend President Androv for his openness and to encourage him to make a practice of regularly communicating with the public in such a manner.

Finally, at the invitation of Deputy Andonovski and the Secretary General-designate, Sashka, Lidija and I were invited to attend a meeting of the Legal and Legislative Commission. We observed the commission performing the roles of committees in many parliaments. They

discussed the agenda and removed some items, the Government's representatives explained bills, the President made detailed suggestions for changes, and they voted.

The Legal and Legislative Commission is the most active of the Parliament's commissions. Other commissions may provide opportunities for NDI assistance. In particular, Deputy Nikola Jovanov, President of the Health Commission and Parliamentary Group Coordinator for DA, may be open to assistance with making his commission more transparent and more effective.

I



Quarterly Report
FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:
POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00
July 1 to September 30, 2001

I. SUMMARY

The outbreak of politically motivated violence in Macedonia in February 2001 has greatly inhibited the country's democratization progress. Ethnic conflict, which since 1991 has plagued virtually every former Yugoslav republic except Macedonia, finally emerged this year as a major obstacle to the country's political and economic development. In spite of the recent cessation of hostilities, considerable uncertainty remains in regards to Macedonia's ability to overcome the political and social challenges presented by an ethnically divided society.

This quarter's activity was severely impacted by the ongoing conflict in Macedonia and the evacuation of NDI's expatriate personnel at the end of June. Despite these events, NDI was able to make some progress through NDI local staff contact with members and staff of parliament and the continuation of the Parliamentary Internship program. In September, NDI brought its local staff to Washington D.C. for an extended session of professional development training.

During this quarter, NDI created a revised plan of action to adjust its objectives and activities to the current political environment. The plan focuses on the Macedonian parliament as the key representative institution that will play a vital role in the country's political stabilization. Other actors, notably political parties, will have pivotal roles in building a stable, democratic political system. As Macedonia prepares for crucial parliamentary elections in early 2002, NDI stands ready to assist parliament, political parties, and civic organizations in managing political conflict and creating an open, participatory electoral process. NDI submitted this workplan at the end of the quarter and is currently awaiting USAID approval. Due to the delays in programming, the Institute will also seek a no-cost extension for the program.

II. BACKGROUND

NDI has provided democratization assistance in Macedonia since 1993 in the areas of civic education, election monitoring, voter education, political party building and parliamentary development. Since 1999, NDI has worked to increase the capacity of

members of parliament (MPs) in their roles as legislators and elected political representatives. Such capacity building is achieved through training MPs and their staff on caucus operations, commission functions, and constituent relations. Considerable progress has been achieved in the transfer of political and legislative skills to individual members of parliament, and promising institutional developments have occurred. Still, inter-ethnic political conflict bordering on open and prolonged warfare has impeded NDI's program implementation and has laid bare important, persistent challenges to the country's stability and therefore its democratization.

Since February 2001, violent conflict has kept Macedonia on the edge of civil war. The conflict has greatly disrupted relations between ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonians and inhibited the country's political and economic development. Months of fighting between Macedonian government forces and the National Liberation Army (NLA) has displaced thousands of Macedonian citizens and deepened pre-existing tensions between the two groups. Drawing its membership from ethnic Albanians in Macedonia as well as from veterans of the now-disbanded Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the NLA's stated goal is improved political and economic rights for Macedonia's ethnic Albanians.

In May 2001, a multi-ethnic "Unity Government" was formed to respond to the crisis and to provide unified political leadership for the country. Composed of Macedonia's four largest political parties the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), and the Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) the coalition was, however, unable to respond politically or militarily, and gradually lost public confidence. Throughout May and June, representatives from the European Union (EU) and the United States attempted to help the two sides find a solution to the conflict and to create the conditions necessary for a temporary deployment of NATO troops once a ceasefire and political settlement were achieved.

An increased level of violence and anti-Western sentiment prompted USAID in June to evacuate its staff and requested that its implementing partners to do the same. For security reasons, NDI evacuated its resident representative in June, and since that time, local staff has kept the NDI office open and continued its work.

In July 2001, international envoys from the United States, EU and NATO began negotiating a settlement that would address many of the ethnic Albanian political demands in exchange for a cessation of hostilities. The resulting Framework Agreement, signed in Ohrid on August 13, outlines a number of constitutional amendments intended to improve the status of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, which include the removal of the constitutional reference to the Macedonian state as the "national state of all Macedonian people," an increase from 5 percent to 25 percent of the proportion of Albanians in the police force, recognition of Albanian as an additional official language in areas with an Albanian population of at least 20 percent, and a limited decentralization of certain authority to local institutions. In accordance with the Ohrid peace plan, the beginning of

parliamentary debate and any steps toward ratification would be contingent on three phases of NATO weapons collection.

In late August, NATO began deployment of Operation Essential Harvest to collect a minimum of 3, 300 voluntarily surrendered NLA weapons. By August 30 NATO had collected more than one-third of the target weapons, thus meeting a key condition for the Macedonian parliament to begin debating the political reforms laid out in the agreement. Furthermore, in spite of initial skepticism about the ability of the Operation to succeed within the limited timeframe, roughly 3,850 weapons were collected by the end of September.

Despite the success of the NATO mission and the fulfillment of the conditions required for the parliament to begin approval and implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, the parliament has been slow to act. After nearly a month of arduous debate, on October 1, parliament approved tentative drafts for 15 constitutional amendments by a slim majority, including changes to the preamble of the constitution to remove the reference to the "national state of the Macedonian people," increased recognition of the Albanian language, and increased representation of ethnic Albanians in the police. However, two-thirds of the deputies will need to ratify the changes, and hard-liners on both side of the divide continue attempts to delay and disrupt the process.

NDI remains committed to the idea that parliament is the central governing institution in Macedonia that, with the proper tools, can serve as a mechanism for conflict prevention, political stability and in turn, democratization. In the past, NDI has worked with parliament to better enable its members and staff to fulfill their roles as the principal democratic representatives of a body of citizens. In preparation for scheduled elections on January 27, 2002, NDI is planning a number of changes to its in-country activities. In the hopes of renewing public confidence in the political process, a pre-election program will be the initial focus of work. However, in the long term, NDI intends to continue its work with parliamentarians, their staff, and the NGO community in order to increase the responsiveness of elected officials to their constituents and to help develop institutional capacity to respond during times of crisis.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Since the evacuation of NDI's resident representative in June, NDI's local staff has provided daily updates on political events and maintained contact with Macedonian political leaders and parliamentary staff as much as possible. Despite the closure of the university, the interns participating in NDI's Parliamentary Internship Program continued to report to the offices of their members and assist with research, drafting, and other tasks as requested by the MPs. Despite NDI's insistence that the interns not place themselves in any possible danger, they displayed great dedication to their work by visiting the parliament on a regular basis. As stated above, NDI's primary focus this quarter was on skills building for its local staff.

Staff Training

In December 2000, NDI conducted in-depth staff interviews and evaluations to determine what training was needed to build a stronger, results-oriented focus within NDI-Macedonia's local staff. In January 2001, a two-day staff retreat focused on building a more effective team-based environment, and in April a half-day training designed to improve internal communication and create a set of office norms was held. To build upon these experiences, NDI-Macedonia's local staff requested additional training in communications (both interpersonal and external), project design and conflict management.

At the suggestion of USAID, NDI-Macedonia's local staff interviewed the staff of other USAID implementers, such as the Institute for Sustainable Communities, to learn more about educational opportunities. The staff discovered that a number of courses in project management training were available, primarily in the United States. Based on program needs, timing and security concerns, the decision was made to conduct the training in Washington, D.C. The professional development program was conducted between September 10 and 21 and included a three-day project management training, a two-day training in conflict management, a visit to the Maryland state house in Annapolis, two "shadow" days on Capitol Hill, and a public presentation on NDI programming in Macedonia.

Project Management Training

From September 10 to 12, the staff took part in a project management training course to increase staff's ability to manage programs with more independence and to gain better understanding of strategic planning, time management, communication, and teamwork. Eugene Spigle, a professional with 35 years of experience in project management with corporations and the United Nations conducted the training. In consultation with NDI, Spigle designed a training agenda to specifically meet the needs of the Macedonian staff, which covered the following topics:

- Project planning and organization
- Design and definition of project objectives
- Conducting assessments
- Schedule development
- Project reporting and evaluation

Visit to Annapolis

On September 14, the staff traveled to Annapolis, Maryland, to tour the State Capitol and learn about the legislative process on the state level. During a half-day meeting with Karl Aro, executive director of the Department of Legislative Services, the group received a full briefing on the legislative process, rules of procedure, and the division of powers and responsibilities between the executive and legislative branches of the government. The briefing illustrated the differences among the types of legislatures

and how differences in the distribution of power among various government branches affect policymaking.

Conflict Management Training

On September 17 and 18, both field and DC Macedonia staff participated in a two-day training on conflict management to further their capacity to work effectively as a team, learn how to discuss difficult issues in a non-combative manner, improve communication skills and apply negotiation skills. Lewis Rasmussen, former trainer with the United States Institute of Peace and OSCE Bosnia, conducted the course and covered the topics of communicating in a professional environment, managing criticism effectively, relationship building skills, strategic planning and problem solving, understanding the sources and dynamics of conflict, and negotiation skills.

Participants were required to role-play and in one example, the staff was asked to alternately play the part of both an OSCE staff member and an ethnic-Albanian engaged in a “heated” discussion on a local disturbance issue. This enabled participants to apply skills learned in “diffusing” difficult and/or potentially violent individuals and situations. In playing the role of the OSCE staff member, the individual was required to imagine himself/herself as an outside member of the community and understand the needs, and not only the positions, of all concerned. A second role-play drew on a real-life experience based on one of NDI’s programs in-country and required the use of newly taught negotiation and strategic thinking skills. In this example, the staff was required to persuade a reluctant and high-ranking member of the parliamentary staff to agree to certain aspects of new programming. In order to succeed, it was necessary to use an approach that took the needs and constraints of the other individual into consideration.

Capitol Hill Experience

To learn about office organization, committee functions and hearings, and constituent relations, on September 19 and 20, NDI staff shadowed Capitol Hill staff members as they conducted daily business. The staff was placed in the offices of Senator Hillary Clinton D-NY, Senator Bill Nelson D-FL, Senator Paul Wellstone D-MN, Representative Gary Ackerman D-NY, Representative Steve Largent R-OK, and in the office of the House International Relations Committee. NDI’s Macedonia staff commented on the high level of professionalism in the offices compared with that in the Macedonian parliament and expressed the value of witnessing such a “results-oriented environment” firsthand. This opportunity provided, “an excellent insight into how the staff performs their multiple tasks and duties in the offices,” and, “we learned about the important roles and the functions of the committees.”

“Brown Bag” Presentation

On September 21, the staff made a presentation to NDI/Washington and representatives from USAID regarding their work on the Institute’s numerous programs in Macedonia. Each of the six visiting staff used the opportunity to describe his or her

individual work, beginning from the program's inception, its impact to date, and results and accomplishments. This was the first experience for most in making a formal group presentation to an audience, either inside or outside of Macedonia. The previous two weeks of training significantly aided in their understanding of the necessary components of a successful presentation. The USAID representatives requested that a similar presentation be made upon their (and NDI's) return to Skopje.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The evacuation of NDI's resident representative at the end of June 2001 along with a tense political environment caused by the ongoing conflict brought most in-country program activity to a halt. During this quarter, NDI's ability to conduct the majority of the parliamentary development program was thwarted. However, the Parliamentary Internship program was able to function during this time.

Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.

Result: After the conflict subsides and parliament resumes normal working conditions, several members of parliament plan to introduce legislation drafted by NDI's parliamentary interns.

V. EVALUATION

Given the events of the last two quarters, NDI has had to revise its 2001 objectives to fit political realities. In October, the Institute submitted a revised description of program activities and is currently awaiting mission approval. NDI is also discussing the possibility of a no-cost extension through July for the cooperative agreement in order to complete activities. NDI anticipates focusing on new objectives before, during and shortly after the next parliamentary election cycle (anticipated in the first quarter of 2002). Following the election of a new class of parliamentarians and a more stable political environment, NDI would continue its parliamentary and political party program.

In consultation with USAID, the following objectives will be suspended until after the election period.

Objective: A professional nonpartisan staff is created or in the process of creation.

Objective: Parliamentary commissions conduct public hearings to incorporate citizen input into legislation and strengthen legislative deliberation and oversight.

Objective: Members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology.

Objective: Members of parliament and non-governmental organizations strengthen their interaction on legislation.

Objective: Members of parliament employ constituent relation techniques that contribute to parliamentary accountability and citizen representation.

Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.

In response to the ongoing conflict and impending elections, currently scheduled for January 27, 2002, NDI is planning a number of changes to its in-country activities. NDI's program would aim to increase the individual conflict management skills of various actors in society – politicians, party members, NGO leaders, and members of the media – in an effort to rebuild public trust in institutions and the political process. In its revised action plan, NDI has proposed the following objectives for the election period:

Objectives

- Orient Macedonian politicians toward constructive leadership and engagement with citizens in the peace process.
- Provide technical assistance in constitutional amendment drafting and/or interpretation.
- Provide communications strategies so that MPs can approach constituents and foster dialogue about the impact of the Framework Agreement and the resulting constitutional amendments.
- Help create a pre-election environment that encourages fair and more transparent elections.
- Assist in reducing conflict among political parties before, during, and after the 2002 parliamentary elections.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Pending mission approval, NDI proposes the following activities for its work in the next quarter and beyond. For a more detailed description, please see *NDI Macedonia proposed plan of action: October 2001 – March 2002*.

Immediate Plan of Action

Timeline: Month One

Activity: Macedonia's parliamentary leaders were excluded from playing a substantive role in the negotiations on the Framework Agreement. As a result, parliamentary group coordinators (caucus leaders) now have the task of passing a number of constitutional changes mandated by an agreement that they did not negotiate and in many cases do not support. The deliberate minimization of parliament's role in the negotiation process has created among political leaders feelings of mistrust toward the international community as well as each other.

As a first step in an ongoing process, NDI would bring a prominent U.S. politician to Macedonia to conduct a series of one-on-one and group consultations with Macedonian politicians of all political parties in parliament. The emphasis will be on the important role that members of parliament (MPs) have in this process. Beyond highlighting the necessary responsibilities of MPs, the consultant would provide support and counsel to help MPs cope with their dual roles as representatives and political party members. NDI believes that a former member of Congress or U.S. administration official would be best suited for this role.

Short-Term Plan of Action

Timeline: Month Two

Activities:

1. Focus Groups. To accurately assess the public's view of parliament, the difficulties faced in implementing the Framework Agreement, and the elections climate, NDI would sponsor a series of focus groups. Before members of parliament can initiate effective contact with their constituents, they need a broader and deeper understanding of current attitudes and priorities. Political party activists and civil society actors also need such information to better craft their respective messages. The data and analysis generated by these focus groups would aid MPs, candidates, and NGOs in framing their interactions with the public. If properly prepared and appropriately released to the local media, the results of the focus groups could also provide an important contribution to future public discussions.

2. Roundtables. In the weeks following, a series of roundtables would bring together Macedonian politicians with their counterparts from other societies in conflict (such as Northern Ireland and Spain). Discussions would center on methods of managing conflict attempted in these countries and their relative success or failure. The roundtables would include practical advice on interacting with constituents in order to facilitate effective public discussion about constitutional changes. The group would discuss methods for coping with the demands placed on MPs by their party leadership during crisis and post-crisis periods. Finally, since MPs' ability to draft and interpret constitutional amendments remains limited, NDI would provide experts to analyze and discuss the constitutional changes required by the Framework Agreement.

Separate roundtables with community leaders from societies in conflict would be conducted in order to incorporate the perspective of civil society into the broader discussion. In cooperation with other USAID implementers in Macedonia, these roundtables would attract NGO and media representatives as well as public opinion leaders.

Elections-Focused Plan of Action

Timeline: Months Two through Five

Activities:

1. Elections Monitoring

During the September 2000 local election cycle, NDI's training of volunteers from the domestic monitoring organization Citizens for Citizens ("C4C") reached more than 1,500 monitors. For the upcoming January 2002 elections, C4C would expand its oversight of the election process and provide the necessary voice of civil society in the following manner:

Media Monitoring. C4C would assess the accuracy and fairness of print, radio, and television coverage afforded to candidates and political parties during the campaign season. To assist in this learning process, NDI would sponsor a study trip for a select group of C4C members to observe the operations of Memo98, an NDI-affiliated Slovak media monitoring organization. Throughout the election cycle, C4C would analyze not only the relative treatment of candidates and political parties by the media but also substantive policy issues, such as interethnic tolerance. Through publication of its work, C4C would aim to encourage the fair treatment of all communities in the media.

Voter Education. To increase citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities on election day, C4C would conduct a countrywide voter education campaign. Using information gained through the focus groups, C4C would promote citizens' active participation in the election processes and work to increase the level of understanding of democratic principles in the country.

Expansion of Trained Monitors. For the January 2002 parliamentary elections, C4C intends to recruit, train, and deploy more than 3,000 volunteer monitors. NDI would provide technical assistance through a train-the-trainers program. Should NDI's personnel not be able to return to Macedonia by October 15, this training would occur in a nearby country (possibly Slovenia).

Strengthened Relationship with the Media. Whether C4C is soliciting volunteers or issuing its final report on election day, a professional relationship with the media is essential to build credibility as a nonpartisan observer of the political climate. NDI would continue to provide strategic and technical advice to C4C on the effective use of media.

Coordination of all Monitoring Efforts. During the election period, NDI would cooperate with the relevant international institutions (OSCE, OHDIR, and the Council of Europe, etc) as well as coordinate the efforts in Macedonia by election monitoring organizations based in other countries (i.e., GONG, CeSID, ENEMO).

2. Political Party Development/Candidate School

In conjunction with the Nansen Dialogue Center, a conflict management skills-building organization, NDI would conduct an intensive program for political party activists and candidates in order to foster attitudes that stimulate dialogue between individuals and groups with different stances and to provide practical advice on negotiation skills, risk assessment, and violence reduction. NDI intends to solicit applicants for the Emerging Political Leaders Program from participants in this training program (please see the Macedonian Program Description 2002-2004 for a full description). NDI would incorporate the results of the focus groups into the program. In addition to election preparation techniques, participants would learn ways to support democratic participation, protection of human rights, and conflict management methods appropriate to the election environment.

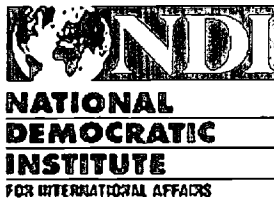
Specific training topics would include the following:

- Office organization (choosing staff, recruiting volunteers, fundraising, and strategic planning);
- Communications (message creation and dissemination);
- Voter contact and identification;
- GOTV
- Political party monitoring
- Conflict management skills (training provided with Nansen Dialogue Center)

Should NDI personnel not be able to return to Macedonia by October 15 for security reasons, this training would occur in a nearby country (possibly Slovenia).

3. Pre-election Mission/Elections Watch

Much like C4C, the international community needs to play a role in ensuring transparent, free and fair elections. Prior to the 2002 parliamentary elections, an NDI delegation of internationally recognized experts would assess the elections climate in Macedonia. NDI would issue public updates that analyze the political environment in the lead-up to the election.



Quarterly Report
FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:
POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. EE-A-00-98-00028-00
October 1 to December 31, 2001

I. SUMMARY

Although the violence that characterized the political conflict in Macedonia during 2001 diminished significantly this quarter, the crisis itself is far from over. Parliamentary work on the passage and implementation of the August 13, 2001, Ohrid Agreements, and the constitutional and legal changes contained therein, proceeded in fits and starts. The process has been characterized by political infighting, a marginalization of moderate voices within the political system, and an almost total lack of communication between political leaders and citizens regarding the important changes being discussed. Although the violence of previous months has more or less subsided, there are fears that renewed outbreaks of fighting could begin in the spring; NATO forces remain indefinitely stationed in the most volatile areas of the country. In addition, a lack of clarity and speculation over the date of parliamentary elections, as well as the required national census, contribute to an overall feeling of insecurity within Macedonia.

Against this backdrop, after a near five-month evacuation, NDI returned to Macedonia in late October 2001 and deployed a new country director in November. Given the new political environment, the Institute and USAID agreed to amend NDI's work plan with new objectives and activities to better address the crisis-related needs of Macedonia. Therefore, program activity in this quarter concentrated on conducting focus groups, preparing election-related activities, and the continuation of specific aspects of the parliamentary development program.

II. BACKGROUND

NDI has provided democratization assistance in Macedonia since 1993 in the areas of civic education, election monitoring, voter education, political party building and parliamentary development. Since 1999, NDI has worked to increase the capacity of members of parliament (MPs) in their roles as legislators and elected political representatives. Such capacity building is achieved through training MPs and their staff on caucus operations, commission functions, and constituent relations. Considerable progress has been achieved in the transfer of political and legislative skills to individual members of parliament, and promising institutional developments have occurred. Still, inter-ethnic political conflict bordering on open and prolonged warfare has impeded NDI's program implementation and has laid bare important, persistent challenges to the country's stability and, therefore, its democratization.

The violence, which broke out at the beginning of 2001 between the ethnic-Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) and Macedonian government forces has subsided, at least temporarily. In part, the cessation of open hostilities is a result of the Framework Agreement for Peace, also known as the Ohrid Peace Accord, signed on August 13. The Framework Agreement outlined constitutional amendments intended to improve the status of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia: an increase from 5 to 25 percent of ethnic Albanian representation in the police force; use of second language in official communication with government institutions for minorities (for minorities with 20 percent of local population); use of the Albanian language in parliament; equitable employment for minorities in state institutions; territorial integrity; and a devolution of power to local government. In the constitutional preamble, the state is now described as made up of citizens of Macedonia, which includes the Macedonian people, as well as Albanians, Turks, Vlachs and Serbs residing in Macedonia.

Ratification of the Agreement and the implementation of the required changes contained within have been fraught with obstacles. Politicians on both sides of the debate have engaged in stalling tactics and appeals to nationalist sentiment in what appear to be attempts at manipulating the process to gain political ground. Although it seems that moderates within the parliament would like to see the changes made and the peace process cemented, hard-liners on both sides continue to dominate the debate. Due to the tenuous nature of the cease-fire, in October President Trajkovski requested an extension of the current NATO troop presence of roughly 1,000 soldiers. The NATO mandate has since been extended, although it is still unclear exactly how long its presence will be required.

The cycle of stalling and returning to progress continued throughout this quarter, as Macedonian politicians addressed, or in some cases did not address, the changes required by the Agreement. Accordingly, pressure from the international community increased, resulting in the indefinite postponement of a proposed IMF Donors Conference for Macedonia due to an inability on the part of parliament to legislate reforms. On November 15, the parliament finally passed a package of constitutional amendments that had been agreed to in August. Out of a total of 120 MPs, 90 voted affirmatively for the changes. Since that time, other contentious issues have remained unresolved, such as a previously agreed-to general amnesty for former NLA combatants who are not accused of war crimes and the Law on Local Self-Government. Although the partial devolution of power to the local level is generally supported, hard-line Macedonians fear that it would lead to a federalization of the country. The month of December passed without any final resolution to this problem.

The timing of parliamentary elections has been another divisive issue. When a unity government was formed to address the crisis in April, one of the conditions laid down by the former opposition party, the Social Democratic Union (SDSM), was the holding of early elections. Parliamentary elections had been scheduled for November 2002, but an early date of January 27, 2002, was then named. However, the possibility of holding elections as early as January has been rejected due to the slow pace of progress on the ratification and implementation of the Framework Agreement and because of serious delays in re-establishing state authority over some volatile areas. Furthermore, with opinion polls showing a great decline in the popularity of many politicians and political leaders, the parties are reluctant to hold elections in

the immediate future. Although it is thought that elections may be called for April, there is still considerable doubt over whether they will indeed occur before the fall of 2002.

NDI's long-term goal in Macedonia has been for the parliament to build and maintain ties with the electorate, draft and analyze legislation, and conduct legislative oversight. This goal falls under USAID's strategic objective 2.1.2 (strengthened parliamentary structures and operations and enhanced communications between citizens and legislators). However, these objectives have been greatly impeded by an inability to work with a parliament that throughout the year was rarely in session and was utterly distracted by the situation at hand. Furthermore, the year's events have overtaken the political reality in Macedonia, and in the current fluid and volatile political environment, long-term parliamentary institution building must be temporarily put aside. In order to respond to what the Institute sees as Macedonia's current challenges to democratization, NDI's priorities and activities have, in the short term, shifted to focus on more direct work with political parties including assisting those who seek resolution to the conflict and more open, transparent politics; helping create an environment for free and fair elections that will reduce the potential for fraud, intimidation and violence; and continuing to track and assess the opinions and attitudes of the electorate as a way to measure progress, positively influence the political dynamics, and provide salient information to key individuals and organizations involved in the process.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NDI's Return to Macedonia and Deployment of Country Director

In October 2001, the temporary evacuation order issued by the U.S. Department of State was lifted, and on October 23 NDI's resident representative returned to Macedonia. In addition, the Institute deployed Sheila Fruman as country director on November 15. Fruman has more than 25 years of experience in legislative governance and politics, electoral and political campaigns, political communications, media relations, opinion research and civil society development. Her previous work for NDI involved working with members of parliament and political parties in Algeria, providing training on voter research, media relations and message development.

During the first six weeks of her presence in Macedonia, Fruman met with politicians from six major political parties, representatives of Polio Plus, Citizens for Citizens (C4C), the Nansen Dialogue Center, NDI's parliamentary interns, numerous women involved in politics, MPs, representatives of the International Republican Institute (IRI), the International Solidarity Center, the Local Government Reform Project, IREX, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the American Bar Association-Central and East European Law Initiative (ABA-CEELI) and the Canadian and American Embassies.

Staff Development

In response to a request from USAID that NDI Macedonia staff who participated in the September professional development training in Washington D.C. share their experiences with other in-country personnel of USAID implementers in Macedonia, the Institute's staff presented a refined presentation to staff from IRI, USAID and IFES. This successful group public speaking

effort was followed by a question and answer session in which they delivered a thorough analysis of the current political situation.

Parliamentary Internship Program

NDI restarted its Parliamentary Internship program in early October following consultations with the parliamentary group coordinators. 24 interns from the previous year agreed to continue their work, providing valuable assistance to the Macedonian MPs during the debate on the Framework Agreement.

However, in some cases, productive work by the interns was disrupted by the uncertainty of the broader political situation. For example, as the MPs waited for President Trajkovski to present the constitutional amendments to the parliament, committees met sporadically and plenary sessions were rare-leaving some interns with little substantive work. Since MPs were focused on passage of the Agreement's conditions, many were simply awaiting instructions from their political leaders. In spite of this, several interns were able to advance their own legislative drafting projects, along with providing MPs with a comparative analysis of electoral systems and foreign affairs laws in Slovenia, Croatia and Yugoslavia.

Recruitment for the next class of interns will begin in March 2002, with final selection completed by May 2002. The new group of interns will begin work either in fall 2002 or when a new parliament is elected, whichever comes first.

Non-partisan Election Monitoring

With the assistance of NDI, in November and December C4C finalized its budget, set organizational priorities, including a clear delineation of administrative and coordinative staff responsibilities, and established a timeline of activities. Several NDI staff members, including CEE Regional Director, Robert Benjamin, met with C4C's board members and regional coordinators to discuss C4C's activities for the 2002 parliamentary election: training of 3,000 monitors; conducting parallel vote tabulation on election day; creating a public awareness campaign aimed at volunteer recruitment; and monitoring media coverage of candidates and political parties during the election cycle.

Focus Groups

With the understanding that a peaceful and politically stable environment is a pre-requisite to democratic development, NDI believed it was imperative to gain a better awareness of citizens' understanding of and views toward the current political situation in Macedonia. To assess the current views and attitudes of a variety of citizens, NDI conducted a series of focus groups.

Between December 15 and 19, NDI conducted seven focus groups with approximately 70 participants selected from Bitola, Tetovo and Skopje. These cities were selected in order to provide widespread and varied geographical representation of Macedonian citizens. Four groups consisted of Macedonian participants and three groups were constituted of ethnic-Albanians.

The specific purpose of the groups was to assess awareness of and attitudes toward the Framework Agreement, explore the need for public information about the Agreement, assess the potential for MPs to communicate with their constituents about the Agreement, determine if there were shared values among Macedonians and Albanians, and situate the Agreement within the overall perceptions of the current political situation in Macedonia after the crisis. The groups were conducted using local moderators provided by BRIMA, a Macedonian research firm. BRIMA also provided simultaneous translation for each group. In attendance were NDI Macedonia Country Director Sheila Fruman and David Calef of New York-based Penn, Schoen and Berland, the firm contracted by NDI to oversee and analyze the research.

A full, detailed report of the research results will be available in January from Penn, Schoen, and Berland, although preliminary analysis on the results is currently being conducted by NDI Macedonia. The extent to which the results will be made public, as well as the exact determination of the audience(s) to whom the results will be presented, is being determined.

A preliminary analysis of the research suggests the following:

- The most pressing issues facing the country for both Macedonians and Albanians are unemployment, the poor state of the economy, political corruption, the unresolved crisis and resulting lack of security, government incompetence and mismanagement and political self-interest.
- Although both groups expressed a strong desire for the country to return to “normal,” many fear that the damage may be too big to repair. Nonetheless, they continue to express the hope that the fighting will not resume and that they will somehow be able to get on with their lives and put the past behind them.
- While some clearly feel betrayed by the way in which the Agreement was negotiated or, in the view of some, imposed by outsiders, by and large people seem eager for real information about what it contains and how it will be implemented. There is a desire, expressed in all the groups, for more information: “there is no opportunity to discuss the pros and cons; we need it for economic reasons but I fear what it will mean; it’s being implemented with no information; not getting any information except in the media.”
- People want politicians to start working together on finding solutions. Since the Agreement was signed by the four major parties, it provides an opportunity for politicians to show that they can work together. If this could be demonstrated, it would be a welcome change. One participant said, “Both sides should find honest leaders who will promote the idea of living together.”

Political Party Training

In preparation for the 2002 parliamentary elections, NDI is working in conjunction with the Nansen Dialogue Center (NDC), a conflict management skills-building organization, to conduct an intensive program for political party activists and candidates.

During this quarter, NDI conducted a series of consultations with Alek Petkovski, NDC's political director, to refine the terms and conditions of future cooperation. The first of four jointly held seminars is scheduled to begin in January 2002.

Other Consultations and Activities

Women in Politics

NDI hosted two informal events for women politicians and political leaders, the first in November and the second in December. These get-togethers allowed NDI to gather information on the current political climate and assess each political party's needs regarding women's development, as well as maintain existing relationships with women political leaders. Importantly, they are one of the only vehicles to encourage and facilitate inter-party communication and cooperation among the participants themselves. Women political leaders from different parties rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to gather and discuss issues of mutual concern. Therefore, the NDI-hosted gatherings provided a unique opportunity for dialogue.

The second gathering, held on December 11, was intended as an informal way to introduce Fruman and Benjamin to the women in attendance. Eleven women politicians were present, including the presidents of the women's sections of the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), Liberal Party (LP), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization–True Macedonian Reformist Option (VMRO-VMRO), New Democracy (ND) and Socialist Party (SP), the secretary of the first branch of the women's section of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) Kicevo, a member of the PDP national presidency, the deputy coordinator of the VMRO-VMRO parliamentary group, and the president of the NGO "Women's Action."

All of the political party representatives emphasized the importance of increasing women's practical skills, especially in communications, and the need for greater confidence-building measures as a way to counter their parties' continued marginalization. The group also supported the introduction of a quota requiring parties to nominate women for one-third of all parliamentary candidates. Throughout this time, NDI continued to act in an advisory role for several women's political organizations, such as Women's Action, which aim to increase the number of women in public office.

Polio Plus

Polio Plus, a disability-rights NGO based in Skopje, has begun conducting an advocacy campaign directed at political parties. In order to increase awareness of disability issues, as well as to increase the representation of disabled individuals within the political system, Polio Plus has asked the largest political parties to commit to fielding at least one candidate with a disability in the upcoming parliamentary election. NDI agreed to offer advice as well as candidate-training if and when appropriate.

IV. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Information Technology: As a result of NDI's technical assistance, parliament listed on its web site the voting record of each MP for each constitutional amendment passed as required by the Framework Agreement.

Parliamentary Internship Program: As a result of NDI's training, parliamentary interns continued to provide legislative drafting support, including proposals for a new coat of arms and comparative analysis of electoral and foreign affairs laws.

V. EVALUATION

The temporary absence of an in-country representative and the severe political crisis significantly hindered program implementation throughout the previous two quarters. Throughout the conflict, NDI's local staff provided daily updates on political events and maintained contact with Macedonian political leaders and parliamentary staff as much as possible. However, the return of NDI's resident representative following the lifting of the evacuation order on October 23 marked a long-awaited return to normalcy and a renewed period of program activity for both the expatriate and local staff.

Given the events of the last two quarters, NDI revised its 2001 objectives to fit political realities. In October, the Institute submitted a revised description of program activities and in November received USAID approval. NDI anticipates focusing on new objectives before, during and shortly after the next parliamentary election cycle. Although anticipated in the first quarter of 2002, it is quite possible that elections will not be held until October or November of 2002, which has made program planning and implementation a more complicated exercise. NDI is conducting its activities with the expectation of elections on April 27, 2002, while simultaneously planning for the possibility of a sudden change in the date.

In consultation with USAID, NDI suspended the majority of its institutional building objectives until after the election period, with the following exceptions:

- Objective: Members of parliament and parliamentary staff have skills with which to conduct legislative affairs through expanded information technology.
- Objective: An expanded group of parliamentary interns increases legislative research skills and begins to work outside the party caucus groups in other parliamentary domains, such as commissions.

The following objectives were approved for the election period:

Objectives

- Orient Macedonian politicians toward constructive leadership and engagement with citizens in the peace process.

- Provide communications strategies so that MPs can approach constituents and foster dialogue about the impact of the Framework Agreement and the resulting constitutional amendments.
- Help create a pre-election environment that encourages fair and more transparent elections.
- Assist in reducing conflict among political parties before, during, and after the 2002 parliamentary elections.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In response to the ongoing conflict and impending elections, currently anticipated for the end of April 2002, NDI expects to conduct the following activities in the next quarter:

Resident Representative Deployment

In January NDI will deploy a new resident representative, Johan Hamels, to run the political party program. During the next quarter, Hamels will take on the primary responsibility of organizing and conducting the candidate schools.

Information Technology

During this quarter, information technology assistance to the parliament was curtailed owing to the dissolution of the Assembly and the cessation of regular parliamentary business. Following the open hostilities in Skopje that culminated in violence directed at the parliament itself in the summer of 2001, NDI put on hold its package of material assistance, including servers, firewalls and software purchases. Following the restoration of NDI's parliamentary program, these installations and upgrades - important to the future operational efficiency of parliamentary communication and research - will be reordered and installed in the first or second quarter of 2002. Once the appropriate hardware and software have been reordered, NDI's Information Technology Director Stephen Jarrett will visit Skopje to oversee its installation and will remain to conduct follow-up training and consultations.

Focus Groups Presentations

Beginning in January, NDI will host a series of meetings to present the findings from the December focus groups. Preliminarily, NDI is planning to present the findings to members of parliament, political parties, local NGOs, NDI will also present the findings in Washington D.C. to USAID, international organizations and other interested parties.

Roundtables

In the weeks following the focus groups, a roundtable discussion will draw together Macedonian politicians with their counterparts from other societies in conflict (e.g. Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Belgium, S. Africa, Canada) to discuss the methods of managing conflict

attempted in these countries and their relative success or failure. Each roundtable will be accompanied by single-party consultations to provide Macedonian politicians with concrete examples of effective political and communications strategies. In January, NDI will explore Macedonian politicians' willingness to participate in such discussions.

Election Monitoring

In order to assist C4C in monitoring upcoming parliamentary elections in 2002, NDI will provide a sub grant to C4C as well as offer consultations and assistance in the coordination and implementation of its monitoring effort. In 2002, C4C intends to deepen its oversight of the electoral process through an expansion of its volunteer base, and implement a more organized and professional public relations and information campaign. Throughout the election cycle, C4C will analyze not only the relative treatment of candidates and political parties but also inter-ethnic tolerance.

Political Party Development/Candidate School

In conjunction with the Nansen Dialogue Center, NDI will conduct an intensive program for political party activists and candidates in order to foster attitudes that stimulate dialogue between individuals and groups with different stances and to provide practical advice on negotiation skills, risk assessment, and violence reduction. The goal of the program is to provide party activists and potential candidates with the techniques and skills to mount an effective campaign based on democratic election principles that are non-violent, non-racist, and inclusive. In addition, the program is intended to improve the overall quality of campaigns and thus the level of voter turnout. Alongside election preparation techniques, participants will learn about ways to support democratic participation, protection of human rights, and conflict management methods appropriate to the election environment.

Specific training topics will include the following:

- Office organization (choosing staff, recruiting volunteers, fundraising, and strategic planning);
- Communications (message creation and dissemination);
- Voter contact and identification;
- Get out the vote (GOTV) efforts
- Political party monitoring
- Conflict management skills (training provided with Nansen Dialogue Center)



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